

A faint, light-colored watermark of a classical building with four columns and a pediment is visible in the background.

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ACROSTIC

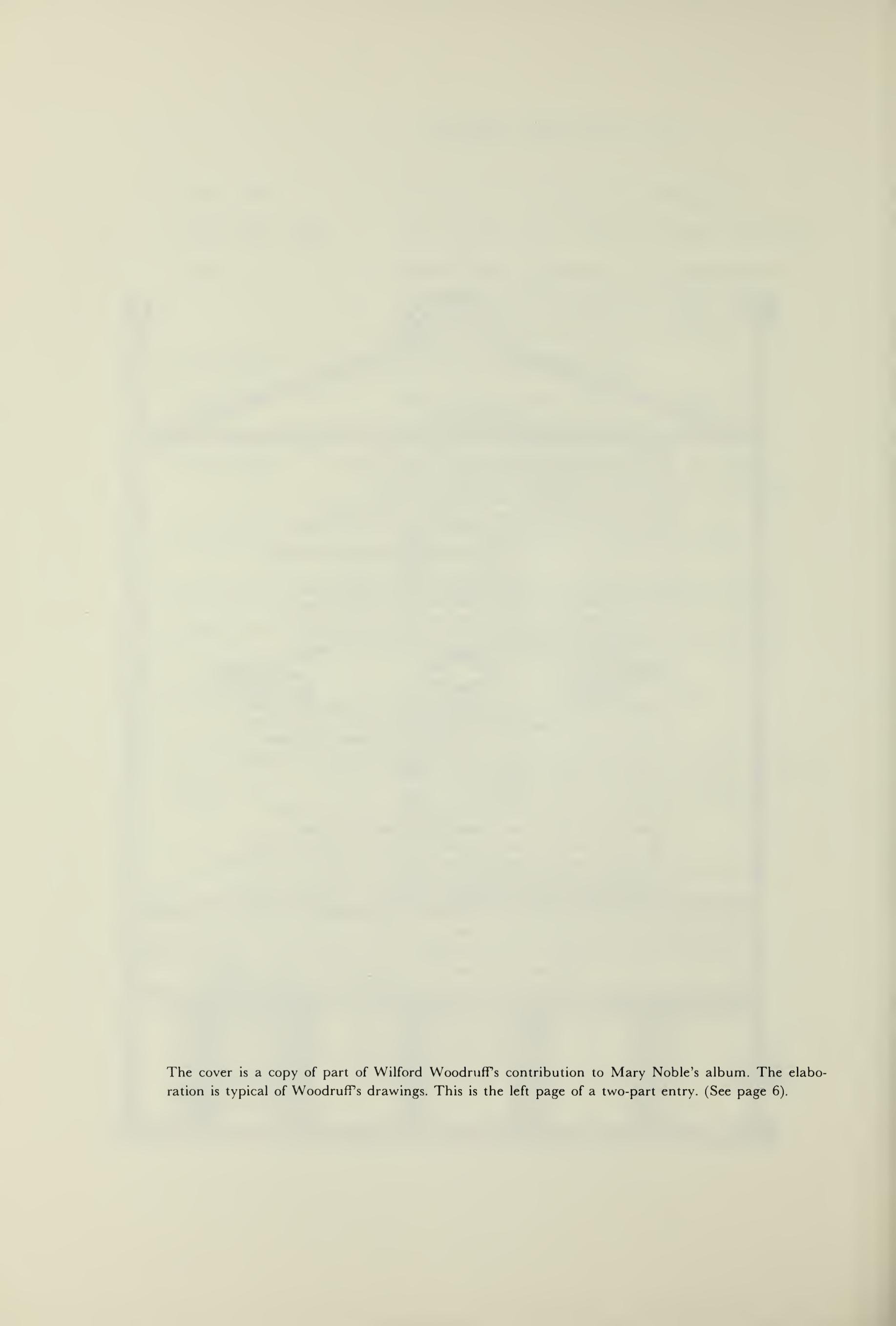
JESUS calls thee, May he not call in vain,
O, wield the word of GOD for Christ shall reign;
Soon will his Saints in his presence stand:
Even on Zions Holy consecrated land.
Prepare thyself O, man of GOD for this events,
Hold not thy peace, cry to the world repent, repent.
Behold thy call is great thy mission wide thy crown is sure

Nigh is the day when judgment stalks abroad
Overwhelming the nations sudden as the rolling flood.
Bear the warning voice Dear friend to toiles abroad
Lift thy voice in faith thou shalt prevail in GOD
Endless blessings shall crown thy work Below
Salvation and Eternal life on thee will GOD bestow

MARY; Jesus hath called thy friend in the vineyard to labour
Always be resigned to his will, He will show thee favor
Remember its the last time for the Elders to glean
Yes thy Companion is needed to wind up this scene
Angels shall visit thee and tell thee of him

Now say to thy husband go forth dear friend
Over the earth proclaim that JESUS descends
By faith and Prayer I'll uphold thee through all strife
Lo dark powers shall not harm thee I'll prevail for thy life
Encourage thy Companion in a cause like this
Salvation is thy reward while Crown'd in Eternal peace

Dear Brother and Sister in the New and Everlasting Covenant, Accept
this token of friendship in remembrance of Elder Willford Woodruff
Written on the 16th Day of May A.D. 1837



The cover is a copy of part of Wilford Woodruff's contribution to Mary Noble's album. The elaboration is typical of Woodruff's drawings. This is the left page of a two-part entry. (See page 6).

AUTOGRAPH ALBUM OF MARY B. NOBLE

By Neal E. Lambert

Significant not only for the holograph entries of early Mormon figures, this volume also offers poignant, moving, and intensely personal glimpses into a life lived close to the center of the dramatic events that characterized the struggles and removals of the early Mormon Church. From New York, to Kirtland, to Missouri, to Nauvoo, to the valley of the Great Salt Lake, Mary Bemans Noble collected in the frame of her own sensibility a number of impressions, views, hymns, and personal expressions that form an incomplete, yet intriguing mosaic of the Mormon experience, a partial reflection of a significant society and an interesting individual.

The book itself will pose some special problems for the researcher since the pages have apparently been rebound and recut at least once. The album was started in 1832. The elaborate ink filigree of the introductory page was done in January 1833. But at some point in the book's history, at least after 1844 (and perhaps even after the death of Mary B. Noble herself), the pages came loose from their original bindings, were gathered up, resewn and rebound, apparently with little attention to the original order. Nevertheless, one can piece back together interesting fragments that make this little book both interesting and significant.

Mary Adeline Beman (or Beeman, or Beaman) was born on the 19th of October 1810, in Livonia, Livingston County in western New York, not far from Palmyra. Her father was a well-to-do farmer, and Mary was given a good education, being certified to teach school herself in the spring of 1828. For the next six years she taught school in the little towns around the area, sometimes living at home, sometimes boarding near her school.

Her father knew the Joseph Smith family well, and from time to

time he drove his family over to visit the Smith farm. There her father became acquainted with young Joseph's experiences and the important events of the Smith household. Parley Pratt mentions the family's close connection with the early Church in a reference in his own autobiography:

Arriving in Geneseo we met with the other elders who had started from Kirtland on the same mission, and with others who were local, and held a General Conference. Among those whose hospitality we shared in that vicinity was old father Beeman [sic] and his amiable and interesting family. He was a good singer, and so were his three daughters: we were much edified and comforted in their society and were deeply interested in hearing the old gentlemen and Brother Joseph converse on their early acquaintance and history. He had been intimate with Joseph long before the first organization of the church; had assisted him to preserve the plates of the Book of Mormon from the enemy, and had at one time had them concealed under his own hearth.¹

Father Beman had obtained one of the first copies of the Book of Mormon to come from the press, and Mary took it with her to her boarding house where she showed it around to the people who were living there. One who picked up the book and examined it was a young miller's helper by the name of Joseph Bates Noble. After reading the book and meeting Brigham and Joseph Young who were in the area preaching, young Noble joined the Church. In the months that followed, he cultivated the attention of the young school teacher through whom he had learned about the Church, followed Joseph Smith to Missouri with Zion's Camp, and returned to New York to continue his suit for Mary Beman's hand. In love from the first, she accepted, and they were married the afternoon of September 11, 1834. From then on, their lot was with the Church: first in Kirtland where they shared the angelic manifestations and the difficult deprivations of that important place, then to Far West, Missouri, only to be driven back to Montrose, Iowa, then two years later to Nauvoo itself for five important years during which Joseph Noble gave Mary's sister, Louisa, to Joseph Smith as Joseph's first recorded plural wife (Joseph Noble himself took two other wives during this period), then through the suffer-

ing at Winter Quarters, then pushing on in the vanguard of the exodus across the western plains, and finally settling for good in the Utah Territory. This is the life that we glimpse in the shuffled pages of the autograph album of Mary B. Noble.

That she walked arm in arm with people significant in Church history is attested by the names that appear in her book. Not only her own sisters—Louisa and Artemesia (the latter would become the wife of Apostle Erastus Snow)—but other significant pioneer women such as Augusta Kimball, Mary Ellen Kimball, and Sara Ann Whitney. One of the most interesting entries is an elaborately decorated acrostic which is addressed and signed

Dear Brother and Sister in the New and Everlasting Covenant, Accept this token of friendship in remembrance of Elder Wilford Woodruff. Written on the 16th Day of May A.D. 1837.

It is reproduced on the front cover. Across the page from the poem is a ringing testimonial also by Wilford Woodruff (in this and other quotes from the album, we have tried to maintain the flavor and style of the original by spelling words just as they are in the original; however, we have added punctuation marks and capitalization for clarity):

Solemn and interesting are the scenes and living realities of the present generation of the human family. . . . Before zion becomes the joy of the whole earth and the glory and knowledge of God covers the earth as the waters do the sea, great tribulations will be felt by the inhabitants of the earth. Sword, famine, earthquakes, pestilence, hail, horrible tempest and fire will carry woe in is march. They that have riches will be as though they had none. All confidence of nations, countries, cities, villages and people will depart. Every man that will not take his sword again[s]t his neighbor must flee to Zion for safety. Ephraim will go through and tread down like a lion of the forest. Judgment will begin at the house of God. Let not the gentiles think to escape. They are bound bundles, their bands are made strong, they are ripened in iniquity. Woe is their doom. Behold, O reader, the signs of the times. Seek meekness. The hour of judgment is near. See that no man take thy Crown. Trim thy lamp. Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet HIM.

W Woodruff

25 Solemn and interesting are the scenes and living realities of the present generation of the human family. The reflecting mind may flit back to the day when GOD spake and chaos herd and this world came into order then trace the history of man from the days of Adam down to eighteen hundred years after Christ. Place both sacred and profane history in a point of light so as to comprehend in one combined mass all the rise, progress, decline and fall of all the nations, kingdoms, and empires of the earth and they do not form a more compounded scenery of grand, awful, sublime, and important events than is to transpire in this last dispensation of the gospel of JESUS CHRIST. The prophets and apostles and all inspired men of God in every age of a theocratical government have looked spake and written respecting this generation with feelings of the deepest interest. In 1930 the stone began to roll. The church and body of Christ became visible. It will continue to be propeled by the arm of JEHOVAH until the Kingdom fills the whole earth, and Israel is gathered and Babylon falls as Christ reigns with his saints. The box, die pine, the fir tree shall stand to beautify the place of Gods sanctuary and make the place of his feet glorious. But before Zion becomes the joy of the whole earth and the glory and knowledge of God covers the earth as the waters do the sea great tribulations will be felt by the inhabitants of the earth. Sword famine earthquakes, pestilence, hail, horrible tempest and fire will carry woe in its march. they that have riches will be as though they had none. All confidence of nations countries cities villages or people will depart. Every man that will not take his sword against his neighbour must flee to Zion for safety Ephraim will go through and tread down like a lion of the forest. Judgment will begin at the house of God. Let not the gentiles think to escape they are bound in bundles their bands are made strong they are ripened in iniquity. woe is their doom Behold O reader the signs of the times. Seek meekness the hour of judgment is near see that no man take thy crown. Triumphant lamp Behold the Bridegroom comes to goe out to meet HIM
W Woodruff

The text of Wilford Woodruff's testimony. In the album, it faces the elaborate "Acrostic" printed on the cover.

When one considers the context of apostasy and defection in which these millenarian words were written, we can sense how precious the pages from her Kirtland experience must have been to the young Mormon wife struggling to hold fast to her faith while so many around her were falling away.

But while several of the autographs are significant mainly because of the importance of the people who wrote them, most are important because they are associated with particularly memorable times in the life of Mary Noble herself. Of course these pages show evidence of having been read many times, and that some of the smudges are from Mary's own fingers is of little doubt. For if the memorabilia contained here is touching for us, it must have been very important for her. One can imagine, for instance, this pioneer wife recalling with a smile her own adolescent enthusiasm in collecting the beautifully sentimental autographs from her friends, from frustrated suitors, from the girls and boys whom she had met as an attractive young school teacher going to socials and parties in such places as Lakeville, East Avon, and Oswego, New York. "Gilbert Forsyth," "A. Hyde," "stranger," "ignoramos," "H. K. McMaster," "G. Chapple"—these may not be signatures familiar to us, but to the young Mary Beman these may well have been dear friends, and their expressions—homely, trite, often extravagant—must have carried a value that far exceeded their inherent literary merit.

There is a special group of entries that were written at the time of Mary's wedding to Joseph Noble. Her husband tells us in his own account how the family felt. "The thought of our leaving their society and moving off for the Ohio was sorrowful, for as yet the family were so closely settled down together that in one half day's drive they could all come together. So it had been for a number of years. They were in the practice of coming together twice a year for a feast. But now the scene is about to be changed. The youngest but two about to break the tie."² We can easily imagine the strong feelings with which members of the family wrote in Mary's little book the tokens of their own emotions at this time of marriage and departure. Louisa's "lines for a Sister," Mary Beman's "lines for Sister Mary," and other expressions from

A mother's love oh thou knowest not
How much of feeling lies
In those sweet words the hopes the fears
the daily strengthening lies
it lives are yet the infant draws
its earliest vital breath
And dies but when the mother's heart
Chills in the grasp of death
Off'll be in whose form thou seek'st
thine all of earthly bliss
Even feb. a love untiring deep
And free from self as this
Ahs no husband Tenderness
Thy gentle heart may prove
But never never will thou meet
Again a mothers love
My love for thee must ever be
Fond as in years gone by
While to the heart it shall be like
A dream of memory
Dearest farewell may angel hosts
Their vigils o'er thee keep
Tis hard as I speak that fearful word
Farewell and yet not weep Sarah Beman
Mother to ~~my~~ Mary Hobbes

The last of a two-page expression apparently written by Mary's mother on the occasion of her daughter's wedding to Joseph B. Noble.

close friends and relatives underline the poignancy of this first parting under the early latter-day call to gather to Kirtland.

Most touching in this group of autographs are two pages of lines written in an unsteady hand by the bride's mother:

Go dearest one.

My selfish love .

Shall never pale thy cheek

Not e'en a mother's fears for thee

Will i (sic) in sadness speak

Yet how can i with coldness check

The burning tears that start

Hast thou not turned from me to dwell

Within another's heart . . .

A husband's tenderness

Thy gentle heart may prove

But never never wilt thou meet

Again a mother's love

My love for thee must ever be

Fond as in years gone by

While to the heart

It shall be like

A dream of memory

Dearest, farewell may angel hosts

Their vigils o'er thee keep

How can I speak that fearful word

Farewell and yet not weep

(signed) Sarah Beman, mother to Mary Nobles

Writing that last name was obviously not an easy task for this mother.

From this time on, the entries in the autograph book are less frequent, but far more serious. The entry of Wilford Woodruff mentioned above is evidence that Joseph and Mary Noble shared in the remarkable spiritual experiences enjoyed by the Saints in Kirtland. But if they shared the blessings of being a part of the early Church, they also shouldered the difficult burdens of pioneering and shared the persecutions suffered by the early Church. Before

My little Hyram, fare thee well;
There is no one your place can fill;
Your lovely eyes, and golden hair,
Fast in my breast is enstamped there.

Beloved you lived; beloved you died;
Your Fathers joy, your Mothers pride;
Beloved by all, who did you see;
Sleep on my son, I'll patient be.

My little Hyram, lovely one;
Rest in peace, till the trump shall sound;
Then thou wilt rise, shake off thy dust,
And there be numbered with the just.

Mary A. Noble

A touching expression written by the grieving Mary Noble after the death of her seventh child at Winter Quarters. The slant lines separating the verses are typical of her own entries in the album.

they left Nauvoo, Mary had given birth to six children—in log huts, in wagons, in the heat of August, in the damp cold of February, seldom under easy circumstances. She had also buried five of those children. So there is a deep pathos in the faintly penciled lines,

*Five lovely children we have lost
There spirits have gone and left this Earth
Their bodies are mouldering in the dust
They remain in perfect peace.*

...

*One lonely son there still remains
For me to build my hopes upon
Unto my prayer O Lord give ear
And spare me this my little dear*

Even though this son, Edward Alvah, did live, death would come again and frequently to the Noble household. In the now-famous burial ground at Winter Quarters, the sorrowing mother would lay the body of another infant son:

*My little Hyram, fare thee well;
There is no one your place can fill;
Your lovely eyes, and golden hair,
Fast in my breast, is enstamped there.*

*Beloved you lived; beloved you died;
Your fathers joy, your mothers pride;
Beloved by all, who did you see;
Sleep on my son, I'll patient be.*

For Mary and Joseph Noble death was to be a part of life.

Several important events from Mary's years in Nauvoo were commemorated by special hymns and verses. The fact that many of the entries are not original does not detract from the fact that they were, to Mary's own particular sensibility, most appropriate. Certainly they were copied not only to mark a significant occasion, but because the text expressed something which Mary herself must have felt. Thus when the Seventies Hall was completed, she copied into her book the full text of a new hymn that is still part of our hymnals:

The Seer
written for the dedication of the Seventies Hall
and dedicated to President Brigham Young:
By John Taylor

The seer, — the seer: — Joseph the seer —
Following of the Prophet ever dear: —
His equal now cannot be found, —
By searching the wide world around.
With God he soared, in the realms of day;
And men he taught the heavenly way.
The earthly seer! the heavenly seer,
I love to dwell on his memory dear: —
The chosen of God, and the friend of men,
He brought the priesthood back again,
He gazed on the past, on the present too; —
And open'd the heavenly world to view.

Of noble seed — of heavenly birth,
He came, to bless the sons of earth: —
With keys by the Almighty given,
He opened the full rich stores of Heaven,
O'er the world that was wrapped in sable night
Like the sun he spread his golden light.
He strove, — O how he strove to stay
The stream of ~~crime~~ crime in its reckless way —
With a mighty mind, and a noble aim
He urged the wayward to reclaim:
Mid the foaming billows of angry strife —
He stood at the helm, of the ship of life

The Seer

*Written for the dedication of the Seventies Hall
and dedicated to President Brigham Young:*

By John Taylor

And when the Nauvoo temple itself was finished she copied into her album the words of the “Dedication Hymn”:

*Lo: Lo: The temple's completed
The Lord hath a place for his head
And the priesthood in power now lighteth
The way of the living and dead.*

*See: See: mid the worlds dreadful splendor
Christianity folly and sword
The Mormons the diligent Mormons
Have reared up this house to the Lord*

Just how deeply Mary Noble was grieved by the assassination of Joseph Smith is suggested by the number of verses regarding his death which she included in her autograph book. There is, for instance, the fiery “Lines by S. [?] Hulet”:

*... O Illinois thy base high-handed crimes,
Stand yet unrivalled on the page of time;
The horrid deeds that now thy country stains
Unequalld (sic) were in Nero's bloody reign. . . .*

She includes also several pieces that show that the prophet has found his place in Paradise. Typical is

*A voice from the Prophet
Come to me*

by W. W. Phelps Esq:”

*Come to me: here's the future, the present and past;
Here is Alpha, Omege, the first and the last;
Here's the fountain, the “river of life,” and the Tree:
Here's your prophet & Seer, Joseph Smith, Come to me.*

In the general assembly of worlds: Come to me.

Come to me; here's the mystery that man hath not seen.
Here's our Father in heaven, and Mother the Queen.
There are worlds that have been, and the worlds yet to be.
Here's eternity, — endless, amen: Come to me.

Come to me, all ye faithful and elect of Nauvoo:
Come ye twelve, and ye High Priest, and Seventies, too.
Come ye Elders, and all of the great company; —
When you've finished your work on the earth: Come to me.

Come to me: here's the future, the present and past;
Here is Alpha, Omega, the first and the last;
Here's the fountain, the "river of life," and the tree;
Here's your Prophet & Seer, Joseph Smith; Come to me.

The last stanzas of W. W. Phelps's song, "A Voice from the Prophet."

The longest and by far the most elaborate is a poem by Eliza R. Snow which Mary copied into her own pages and dated July 1, 1844—just four days after the event the poem commemorates so vividly:

“The Assassination of Gen’ls Joseph Smith and Hyram Smith, First Presidents of the church of latter day saints; who were massacred by a mob, in Carthage, Hancock, Co. Ill. on the 27 of June, 1844”

*Ye heavens Attend! Let all the earth give ear!
Let Gods and seraphs, men and angels hear—
The worlds on high—the universe shall know
What awful scenes are acted here below!
Had nature’s self a heart, her heart would bleed
For never, since the Son of God was slain
Has blood so noble, flown from human vein.*

If Mary Noble is an example, the loss of their prophet and the loss of their city did nothing but intensify the resolution of the Saints as they began their Western exodus. While the people mourned the loss of their leader, the sense of destiny with which Israel’s Camp set forth for the new Zion in the mountains of the West is captured with singular vividness in the marching songs and verses that this particular pioneering woman put down in her autograph book as she and her husband made their way toward the valley of the Great Salt Lake. Under the title “Oh! happy land” Mary Noble wrote,

*Oh! happy land for thee we sigh
When will the moment come
When shall we on mount zion stand
and dwell with saints at home

We’re tired of wandering through the east
This land of sin and gloom
We long mount zion for to see
And dwell with saints at home*

And under the title “Come go with me” she writes,

*Come go with me, come go with me
Ye saints of god, come go with me
The time has come we must away
To distant lands where god shall say
No longer let us hunger here
The world is doomed to wo and fear
This gentile race the priesthood hates
We have no home within these states
Let us away and seek our rest
Our home's not here, it['s] in the west
Come go with me. . . .*

And further down the same page,

*Lo; a mighty host of Israel
Tented on the western shore
Of the noble Mississippi
Which they had been crossing o'er
In the last days dawn of winter
Bound with frost and wrapt in snow
Mark the word is onward, onward;
Camp of Israel rise and go . . .*

Whether or not these verses were original with her, Mary Noble felt impressed enough by the feeling expressed in these lines to copy them, sometimes in apparent haste, sometimes with painstaking care, into the pages of her increasingly valuable autograph book. There was then, at least in Mary's mind, an appropriate rightness in the following verses composed by Eliza R. Snow and copied in January 1847, with meticulous penmanship in the hand that we have come to recognize as Mary Noble's own:

*A Journing song for the Camp of Israel.
Dedicated to Pres.t B. Young & Lady.
By Miss E. R. Snow.
(Tune Auld Lang Syne)*

*The time of winter now is o'er
There's verdure on the plain
We leave our sheltering roofs once more
And to our tents again*

verses Composed by Mary A. Noble
In her last sickness; written in her Album
by her Companion Joseph B. Noble

My dear Companion now I write
May filial love with us unite
And ties of friendship around us bloom
Till we are wrapped with in the tomb

My dear Companion you I love
Your presence I adore above
The gold of Orient that doth shine
But Heavenly treasures are divine

Although afflicted, dane I refine,
No, I know if faithful I shall shine
With noble spirits that now dwell
Where all is peace, where all is well

One thing I know has proven true
Eight lovely babes I've borne to you—
We now remain with us awhile
While six with purest spirits dwell

This is the first part of the text mentioned on the next page. The complete piece has thirteen stanzas and fills three pages of the album.

Chorus

*Then camp of Israel! onward move
O Jacob! rise and sing
Ye saints! the worlds salvation prove
All hail! to Zion's king.*

*We leave the mobbing gentile race
Who thirst to shed our blood
To rest in Jacob's hiding place
Where Nephite temples stood*

Chorus

After the arrival in the Salt Lake Valley, only a few pieces found their way into the autograph album. In 1848 Mary collected autographs from Augusta Kimball and Mary Ellen Kimball, but any hopes she may have had of enjoying again the grace and pleasantries of a settled society were never realized. On February 14, 1851, evidently having never recovered from the birth of her ninth child, Mary Noble died. She was forty years old. And perhaps nothing in this whole book moves the reader quite so deeply as the artistically rough but terribly poignant piece dictated from her bed as she lay, sick and weak, anticipating this last birth and her own death:

Lines Composed by Mary A. Noble in her last sickness; written in her Album by her Companion Joseph B. Noble":

...

*One thing I know has proven true
Eight lovely babes I've borne to you—
Two now remain with us awhile
while six with purer spirits dwell*

*Me thinks while on my bed I lay
There spirits come to me and say
"My dearest mother come to us
For in your confidence we trust."*

"No my dear children wate awhile

*until my work on earth[’s] fulfilled
For my children here that now remain
Need my attention and my time.”*

*Will you except my husband Dear
These broken lines they may appear
Yet from a hand of friendship given
A kindly boon to lead to heaven—*

*And when the trump of god shall sound
Awake the saints that under ground
May you be cawled to recieve your friends
And on your head be placed a crown*

*May I prove worthy of a call
And from you[r] lips the sound may fall
“Come-forth to meet your friends and children dear
On your head a crown wih glory shall appear.”*

Thus Mary A. Beman’s life ended. That it was a full life is suggested in the fragile pages and the scattered entries of her autograph album. That the album is so rich and yet so incomplete is one of the delightful frustrations of scholarship. That we have the book in the Harold B. Lee Library is a high honor and an acquisition for which all of us can be very grateful.

¹Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography* (Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, 1950), p. 110.

²Journal of Joseph Bates Noble, BYU Library, Special Collections, MSS. #968, p. 12. The most complete account of the life of Mary Noble is in Hazel Noble Boyack, *A Nobleman in Israel* (Pioneer Printing Company, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 1962).

News Notes

The Harold B. Lee Library was dedicated on March 15, 1977, after the completion of the new addition, which more than doubled its size. The assembly room was named after Alice Louise Reynolds, in remembrance of that great teacher.

The Lee Library now has seating capacity for 4,800 students at one time. We are adding 55,000 books, 14,000 serials, and 45,000 microform units per year to the collection. At the present time, it contains more than 1,300,000 volumes of books, serials, documents, and pamphlets; and 320,000 microforms. Its ultimate capacity is over two million volumes.

It is estimated that 20,000 students use the library each day when school is in session, and that each year the librarians answer more than 100,000 questions relative to research and reference.



Friends of the Brigham Young University Library Newsletter
Volume 14 Number 3/4 Summer 1977
Published by the Friends
Harold B. Lee Library, Provo, Utah 84602

